

Gridiron Gazette : Underworld Denizens

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This month we dig up facts about Underworld Denizens. We'll make reference to other teams but we all know it's really about the Creepers baby!

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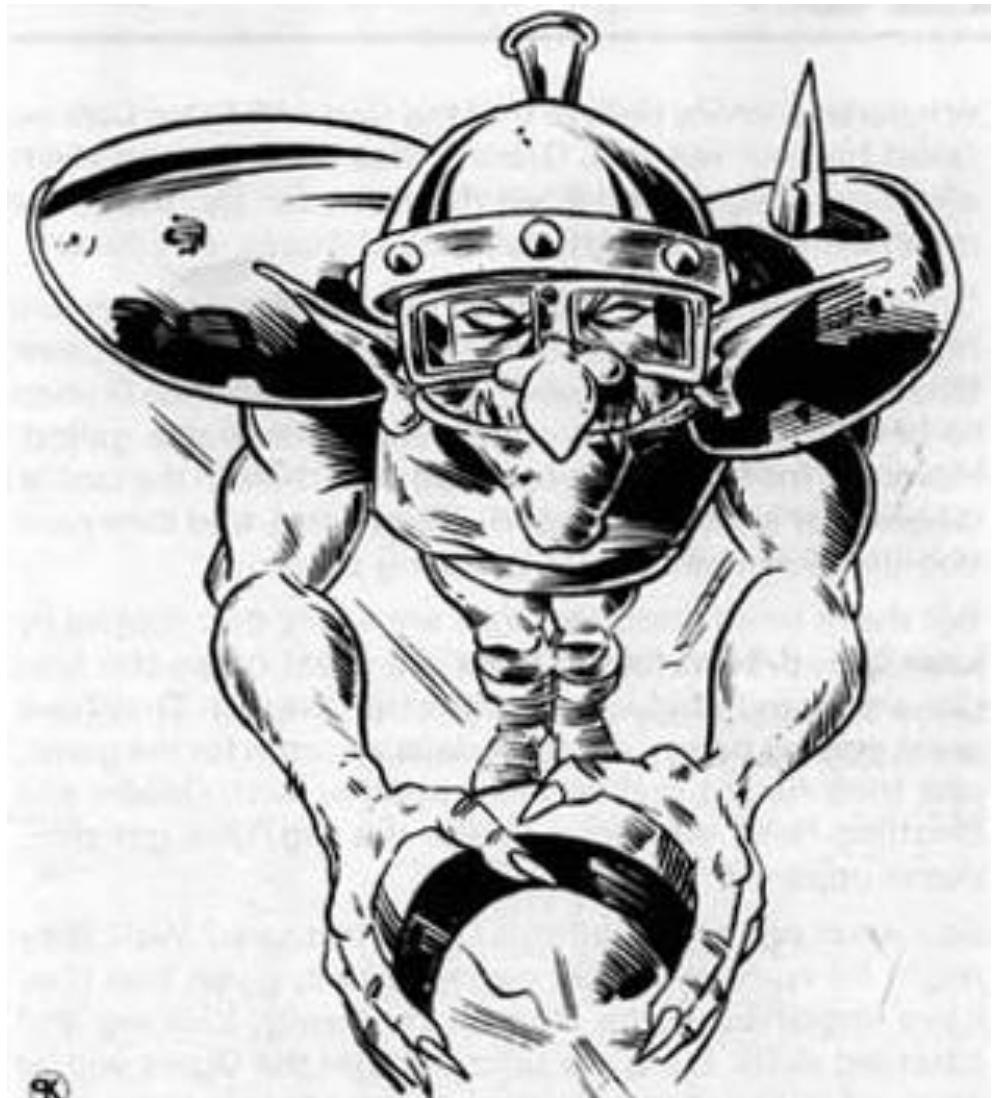
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The Stadium

If the Creepers home stadium has a name . . . nobody seems to know what it is. It consists of a patchwork of tunnels which may be more useful as a Dungeonbowl arena. Within it, written in what we hope is brown paint, is the 'Hallway of Victory'. Hard to believe the Chaos Cup resided here for a season (when it wasn't actually playing of course) but it is now completely empty!

Their impressive warren of tunnels was enough to earn a sponsorship deal from Imperial Mines.

Under new management

There have been so many coaches at the Creepers over the years that the scribes and statisticians haven't been able to keep up. The latest is something of a figure of mystery as nobody knows who it is. We can tell he's human (surprisingly) but that's all we know. He once gave a brief interview to the Spike! Journal where it was revealed his official title, as with all of his predecessors, is 'Soon-to-be-replaced Head Coach'. There's nothing like job security!

The same reporter stole a look at his playbook . . . it consists of one page, just the front cover of a book, and even this is ripped! Wisely he may be following the same tactics as Fleshbard.

Underworld Creepers – digging deep!

- By Dolf Ungerhaagen

With the Creepers it's not so much passing the ball, its more like passing the buck. They have bred a culture focused on finding someone to blame . . .

History

2424 - Blood Bowl has always had a way of bringing people together, sometimes in the most unlikely of ways. Two settlements of goblins and Skaven virtually lived on top of each other in a warren of interconnected tunnels. Fights and conflicts were commonplace until someone has the first of two brilliant ideas which would transform their futures. Why not play Blood Bowl to resolve their differences? What a great idea! The spirit of combat on the pitch and of co-operation off it soon bore fruit. Life expectancy rose by as much as 30% (quite how goblins or Skaven calculated this figure seems highly dubious) and they banded together to see off mutual enemies.

2440 - There remain issues over the teams formed and who belongs to which team along with a host of other petty conflicts. Then a goblin had the second utterly brilliant idea . . . why don't they band together and form one team? The goblin foolish enough to voice the brainwave was beaten very nearly to death by both sides for the cheek of suggesting it. However, a week later a joint team ventured forth of both Skaven and goblins . . . the Underworld Creepers were born!

2441-69 - The Creepers are far from successful and suffer a long line of heavy defeats. Their union hangs by a thread, each side of the team is frequently at odds with the other. Fights in the dressing room, fights in the dug out and even fights on the pitch are common. However, when things get really bad, they remember that they are in it together . . . and blame the coach! The Creepers go through a long succession of coaches.

2470 - Lance Fleshbarb is appointed the new head coach and is keen to avoid the fate of pretty much all of his predecessors. He hits on the oh so simple idea of letting the players choose the tactics and the team formation. It seems to work; the players are a little more invested in the team and have nobody else to blame but themselves.

2480 - In a match against the Greenfield Grasshuggers, the halflings try the odd tactic of disguising two of their players, stood on top of each other, as an Ogre. The Creepers at this point are led by a very rare creature indeed, a mighty Troglodyte. Not being fooled by the masquerade, the Troglodyte swallowed both halflings whole.

2484 - The Creepers take two steps forward and one mighty leap back. They actually manage to win the Chaos Cup thanks in part to a new crop of mutated players who had joined the team, giving them an unexpected edge. One of those new players was the Chaos Cup itself who starts for the Creepers in a number of critical games. Their celebrations know no limit and, in their ecstasy, they ritually sacrifice Lance Fleshbarb, the one person to have kept the team together.

2485 - The new head coach almost does the unthinkable . . . the Creepers make the Chaos Cup final again but lose to the Arctic Cragspiders. The coach gets to survive the aftermath!

2488 - With the collapse of the NAF a number of teams fold and the player market is briefly flooded, allowing teams to pick up assets relatively cheap due to all of the choice (even in Blood Bowl, supply and demand economics matter). The team is transformed over night as they sign Garbage Throttlesnot, Shaftsplitter Grim and star blitzer Split Tendoncutter.



Pick 'n' Mix

By
Gerhardt
Schumpf

As we've already seen, the Creepers will happily push the limits of their roster, fielding pogo players and Troglodytes before they finally introduced trolls instead. These aren't all of the more unusual players to step onto the pitch for them.



When Orcidas took over the Chaos Cup, one of the rules they insisted on was that each team had to field an Orc. The Creepers realised this was a chance for them to get some talent on the pitch and so invested in an Orc Blitzer. It proved to be a short term hiring. They soon faced the Chaos All-Stars who had the 3 headed, wolfish beastman Serby Triomphe on the roster that day. Serby made a beeline for the unfortunate Orc and each head ripped off both of his legs and an arm, before running off with them. Foolishly he did leave the arm clutching the ball behind, but with no legs that Blitzer was going nowhere fast!

The Creepers were happy to experiment with secret weapons, taking inspiration from goblin teams. Another short-lived experiment was the hiring of goblin bombardier Gakdup Goremaker in a match against the Bad Bay Hackers. Gakdup, not too bright it has to be said, lobbed a bomb at Kur Ritternacht, the Hackers starting thrower at the time. Ritternacht, a skilled ball handler, caught the bomb and expertly threw it directly into the Creepers dug out where the rest of the bombs were stored. The resulting explosion killed 10 Creepers huddled inside. Miraculously, they were still able to field 11 players for the next drive . . . investigations continue into the counting irregularities.

Records also show that at one time the Creepers fielded squigs, another subterranean creature that would seem an obvious fit. However, for equally obvious and very bloody reasons, the squigs never became a full-time feature.

Finally, in a time of roster fluidity after the collapse of the NAF, all Denizen teams settled on allowing Snotlings onto the roster. At least it gave someone for the goblins to boss about adding some harmony to the dressing room.



No Mercy!

The modern-day Creepers are a genuine threat, but historically they rarely won games or troubled anyone. Therefore, if you offer them the chance of an easy win, they'll take it regardless of the opposition. One season the fixtures schedule suffered a terrible mishap and somehow they were pitted against a team from Mother Superiors School for the Blind. A lot of truly evil teams would have refused to play that game. The Creepers relished it and slaughtered the opposition happily! Never underestimate the cruelty of the downtrodden!

Record Breakers!

Surprisingly, the Creepers do hold a number of records, but they are rarely ones you would brag about . . .

The two most well-known ones are -

Most Self-inflicted player fatalities (off pitch per season) (2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2492)

Most Self-inflicted player fatalities (off pitch per game) (Every year since 2440 when they were formed!)

This won't be remotely surprising to anyone who follows the game. It remains a mystery how the Creepers function as a team when they spend as much time fighting each other as they do the opposition. Despite that, they do somehow make it work and on their day they can be a force to be reckoned with.

Sadly, for the Creepers, those days are few and far between. Their routine arguments and fights over whose fault the latest failed scheme was can spill over into the crowd. Subsequently, they also hold the record for having started the most riots as well!

Skarp Sorehead

Talking of records, one Creeper may still be setting one right now. Skarp, like the other famous Sorehead, was a pogoer on the Creepers roster. At one point against the Middenheim Marauders he managed to hypnotise himself with his rhythmic bouncing and so bounced out of the stadium and out of Middenheim and eventually out of the Empire! He was last seen in Luccini, Tilea and holds the record for the longest pogo ever.

Just deserts

'Farty' Fubby Francis played for the Creepers in the late 70's and early 80's. He was a typical goblin in that he would spitefully bully anyone he could. This led to a number of deaths on the Creepers backroom staff at his green, wort-ridden hands.

Sometimes however, bullies get bullied. The Creepers in 2482 faced off against the Darkside Cowboys and their new signing, Hubris Rakarth. We can't print what Rakarth did to Fubby in that match, it was so hideous we're not allowed to. You can't even watch the cabalvision reruns. Suffice to say, whenever Fubby thinks about it now, he earns his 'Farty' nickname all over again!

Cheesed off

No good deed goes unpunished on a Denizens team! The Tunnel Brothers were on a terrible run of form and so Soursnik the team mascot decided to cheer them up. For comedy effect he dressed up as a mouldy lump of cheese, setting off a Skaven feeding frenzy as he was gobbled up.

Main course

Droter Retch, coach of the Fungal Cowboys and member of Clam Moulder, claimed to have created Gobblar Grimlich. Alas before he could prove it, in his joy at finding out where he was from, Gobblar ate him whole!

The terrible trio – talented terrors!

- By Rusty Hoelle

The signings of 2488 give Creeper fans a real chance at success. As the 2490's drift by, that hasn't resulted in silverware (yet) but they have been on the fringes of success frequently. Don't write them off (or turn your back on them!).

Garbage Throttlesnot

The story goes that when the Creepers coach went looking for Garbage to join the team, he literally had to dig the goblin up. It's not entirely clear why Garbage likes to bury himself, whether it's his special place in times of stress or maybe it's where he lurks to ambush by-passers. Either way, he has made a fine edition to the team

Garbage soon became infamous for his ability to find space in the opposition half. His patented 'knee-capping' technique removes the opposition safety, leaving him free in the backfield for a scoring pass. Of course, he doesn't always get the pass, there are times when his Skaven teammates tend to hog the ball. However, the fact on rare occasions he is thrown a pass is enough for him. Speaking of his previous goblin team, he said "I kooda wayted me 'ole life fer a pass from wun of der boyz'.

In his career he's caught 100 passes for 2,816 yards and 47 touchdowns. Fairly decent stats, but what makes him stand out amongst goblins, and helps him command his huge 2 figure salary, is the fact he simply survives game after game. That staying power deserves reward!



Shaftsplitter Grim

Shaft as the team's thrower calls all of the offensive drive plays. The fact the rat has talent is not in doubt with anyone. What many do wonder is just how many games he has potentially cost the Creepers? His preferred receiver is unquestionably "Fast Draw" O'Gore, the teams Gutter Runner. It's understandable as he has better hands than anyone else. However, the amount of games Garbage Throttlesnot has been wide open for an easy score but Shaft ignores him for his Skaven teammate is shocking!

Split Tendoncutter

Playing as a defensive safety, Split is one of the most adept players in the league at sweeping across his own backfield. Home fans chant is prowess and intimidate visiting players with choruses of how the only player to ever get passed Spilt was Ramtut III . . . and this he did in two halves as a devastating tackle from Split literally ripped him in two!

Playing from deep, he's picked up 45 interceptions and made 96 kills for the Creepers so far and that number looks unlikely to be added to much further. At 44 Split is ancient for a Skaven, having lived to almost 3 times their normal age. Retirement or death will be calling soon. It's not hard to see age creeping into his game. In a recent match he scored four touchdowns impressive, but one of them was for the opposition following a brief period of confusion on which end was which on Split's part. You can rest easy old fella, the Hall of Fame beckons.

Keeping bad company

- By Lastiges Weisschen

Although the Creepers are by far the most famous Denizen teams, there are other mixed goblin and Skaven team out there jostling for top spot.

Contrary to what many think, the Fifth Column Tunnellers, formed in 2436, were the first Denizen team recognised by the NAF. Initially however many just assumed that they were a Skaven team with their troll and goblin players being nothing more than furless rats thanks to some vile mutation or experiment. It took a while for pundits to catch on they were actually different species. This assumption that a Denizen team's goblins aren't really goblins is a surprisingly common issue. Now the Tunnellers never play home games, they are purely a touring team.



The Armless Dozen began as an all Skaven amateur team which stipulated all team members must have at least one tentacle. With the rise of Clan Rigens, the Dozen were thrown out of Skaven society. Officially it was because their mutations were not deemed to be official blessings of the Great Horned Rat, more likely unofficially it's because they were terrible! This drove them into the tentacled clutches of a tribe of goblins, where they banded together to keep playing.

On the subject of mutations, the Cragmere Critters are in a class of their own. Cragmere sits on a huge and powerful deposit of warpstone, which feeds a fast growing, dense forest of psychedelic mushrooms. The Denizen team formed here has an ever-shifting roster as their players warp and mutate as a ridiculous rate. Few of them remain viable for more than a game or two.

Fear the Grim Squeakers, for we are death incarnate to all opposition!

Every team needs to try and build an edge, sometimes they need to talk big even if they can't back it up. Anything to try and bolster their own morale. In the case of the Squeakers, the opposition should perhaps heed their words.

The Squeakers have found an odd loophole which they are exploiting to its fullest. Their team troll they claim is called Whiskers. However, the Squeakers also keep a small herd of minotaurs caged up, six of the brutes. By sheer coincidence, all of the minotaurs are also called Whiskers. To the casual observer they are clearly minotaurs and yet the Squeakers claim they are actually horned trolls and seem to get away with bringing 'Whiskers' along to each game. They are rarely clear on which Whiskers or indeed how many. When the herd is released onto the pitch, Whiskers will appear to have a sudden spike in his casualties caused rate following the carnage. Any statisticians not at the game will miss the fact there are six Whiskers and not one, will be none the wiser.

Stay at home

The Dragon Crag Dirtbags are in something of a no win situation. Their home stadium is based in Karak Azgal, a former dwarf city and outpost. The former owners are pretty keen to get the city and the stadium back, but its current owners show no signs of moving on just yet. This means two things . . .

Firstly, any tournament or league the Dirtbags enter is guaranteed to be chock-a-block with dwarf teams. The only way they can return to their former city currently is as a host of travelling fans and players. As there is a long list of grudges to be crossed out of clan books, the Dirtbags face a constant stream dwarf opposition. It's a wonder there are any player left still willing to play!

Secondly, it also means the Dirtbags can never go on tour for fear of returning home and finding they no longer have a home to return to! However, each sell out home game against dwarfish opposition refills their coffers, so one issue kind of resolves the other!

It's all for show . . .

In the 2460s, the Green Destroyers allowed cabalvision camras to broadcast their training and off field activities. The show was a huge hit and made the Destroyers super popular until it was revealed they were all paid actors. The show and the team a fake!

Who's Who . . . on the undercard of the Underworld Denizens

These are all players who have scampered over the pitch, arguing with teammates as they go, for a Denizen team.

Skaven Blitzer

Name	Team	Status
Ben	**Freebooter**	Alive
Noma Phlegm	**Freebooter**	Alive
Seeth Festerguard	**Freebooter**	Alive
Split Tendoncutter	** Freebooter **	Alive
Stinky Blood-dripper	**Freebooter**	Alive
Tendoncutter Jake	Underworld Creepers	Alive



Skaven Thrower

Name	Team	Status
Caliber Kraven	**Freebooter**	Alive
Shaftsplitter Grim	Underworld Creepers	Alive



Skaven Gutter Runner

Name	Team	Status
"Fast Draw" O'Gore	Underworld Creepers	Alive
Gregor Hangman	**Freebooter**	Alive
Jonah Jugular	**Freebooter**	Alive
Sneaky Rattus	**Freebooter**	Alive



Skaven Linemen

Name	Team	Status
"Fat" Brainsplatter	Underworld Creepers	Alive
Firespitter Cleave	Underworld Creepers	Alive
"Race" O'Bunyon	Underworld Creepers	Alive
Skrit Heartbleeder	Armless Dozen	Alive

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Goblins

Name	Team	Status
"Ace" Fireblade	Underworld Creepers	Alive
'Farty' Fubby Francis	Underworld Creepers	Alive
Fester Rustblade	Underworld Creepers	Alive
Garbage Throttlesnot	** Freebooter **	Retired
J.J. Gonzo	**Freebooter**	Alive
Lickfester Midden	Underworld Creepers	Alive
Notchblade Abcess	Underworld Creepers	Alive
Piles Openwound	Underworld Creepers	Alive
"Slasher" Bowelgrim	Underworld Creepers	Alive
Snazzy Johnson	**Freebooter**	Alive
Spike Skinelf	Underworld Creepers	Alive
Stickpig Maim	Underworld Creepers	Retired
Wildman Teethgarland	Underworld Creepers	Alive



Trolls

Name	Team	Status
Grogat Crunchskull	** Freebooter **	Alive
Whiskers	Grim Squeakers	Alive



Other races or positions

Name	Position	Team	Status
Gakdup Goremaker	Goblin Bombardier	Underworld Creepers	Alive
Skarp Sorehead	Goblin Pogoer	Underworld Creepers	Retired
Whiskers	Minotaur	Grim Squeakers	Alive - there are six of them!



Staff

Name	Position	Team	Status
Droter Retch	Head Coach	Fungal Cowboys	Dead - Eaten by Gobblar Grimlich
Lance Fleshbarb	Head Coach	Underworld Creepers	Dead - Ritually sacrificed by the team
Soursnik	Mascot	Tunnel Brothers	Dead - Accidentally eaten by the team
The Graves	Cheerleading Squad	Underworld Creepers	Alive

Underworld Denizen teams

*Armless Dozen
Cragmere Critters
Darkholm Delvers
Dragon Crag Dirtbags*

*Fifth Column Tunnellers
Fungal Cowboys
Green Destroyers
Grim Squeakers*

*Haakenstadt Screechers
Tunnel Brothers
Underwellers
Underworld Creepers*



Looking ahead

In the next issue, the Gazette get right flippin' spooky as we look at the black arts of the Necromantic Horror teams. We'll reluctantly be asking such questions as . . .

- *What's Frank N Stein's love life like . . . ?*
- *What can you do with 16 dead Halflings . . . ?*
- *Is it mandatory for all Horror teams to have cages in the dug-outs . . . ?*



Final Fact!

One of the ways in which Clan Moulder funds itself, is by creating all manner of walking and crawling horrors and then selling them to Denizen teams. After all, few other outfits would be desperate enough to sign them. It's not clear if Skrit Heartbleeder is quietly one such example. Playing for the Armless Dozen, he is a writhing ass of tentacles and was once voted as the 'Most Detested Ratman in Under-Altldorf'. Praise indeed for such a monster!